

# Focus Schools Guide

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As part of Oklahoma’s ESEA flexibility waiver, the Department is required to annually identify, based on the most recent data available, schools that have specific ESEA subgroups with low achievement and/or graduation rates as “Focus” schools. In Oklahoma, those subgroups are African-American, Limited English Proficiency, and Special Education students for low achievement. The subgroups for low graduation rates are African-American and Hispanic students.

The U.S. Department of Education requires that the number of Focus Schools must be at least 10 percent of the total number of Title I schools in Oklahoma. To satisfy this requirement, schools that satisfy all of the following criteria will be identified as Focus schools:

1. The school must have a sufficient proportion of their student population belong to at least one of the focus-eligible subgroups (see **Appendix A** for details on how this criterion is determined).
2.
  - a. The school’s performance on federally required reading and math assessments (i.e., grades 3 through 8 reading and mathematics, the English II EOI, and the first Mathematics EOI taken at a high school grade level) for a focus-eligible subgroup is at or below the focus cut score for that year and subgroup, or
  - b. the average of the school’s graduation rates for a focus-eligible subgroup from the three most recently reported school years is at or below the focus graduation cut for that year and subgroup, unless the school’s graduation rate has significantly improved during that time (see **Appendix B** for details on how the all focus cut scores are calculated), or
  - c. the school’s graduation rate for the All Students group is less than the statewide graduation rate for the All Students group.
3. The school is not already identified as a Priority school.

Any school previously identified as a Focus school will be required to make their Annual Measurable Objects for the relevant subgroups for two consecutive years after they are initially designated as Focus for that particular subgroup in order to be eligible to exit Focus school status.

## **Appendix A**

### **Low Performance (for Criteria 2.a)**

In order for a school to be eligible for a focus designation based on low achievement of focus-eligible subgroups (i.e., African-American, Limited English Proficiency, and Special Education students), the percentage of students enrolled in grades or courses that culminate in a federally required math or reading assessment that also belong to a focus-eligible subgroup is first determined for math and reading separately. For example, if a school has 100 total students combined in grades 3 through 8 and Algebra I, and 20 of those students are Special Education students, then the percentage of students in this subgroup for math would be 20%.

A school is eligible for a focus designation if the percentage for any subgroup is greater than the statewide percentage for that same subgroup. The percentage can be greater in either math *or* reading.

### **Low Graduation Rates (for Criteria 2.b)**

In order for a school to be eligible for a focus designation based on low graduation rates of focus-eligible subgroups (i.e., African-American and Hispanic students), the percentage of students in a graduation cohort that also belong to a focus-eligible subgroup is first determined. For example, if a school has 100 total students in the most recently reported graduation cohort, and 20 of those students are African-American students, then the percentage of students in this subgroup would be 20%.

A school is eligible for a focus designation if the percentage for any subgroup is greater than the statewide percentage for that same subgroup.

### **All Students Graduation Rate (for Criteria 2.c)**

Because the All Students group includes 100% of a school's student population, all high schools are eligible to meet criteria 2.c providing they have at least 10 students in the graduation cohort.

## **Appendix B**

### **Calculating Focus Cut Scores for Low Performance**

The focus cut score for each subgroup is calculated by ranking the subgroup performance of Title I schools on their federally required reading and math assessments (i.e., Reading and Math in grades 3 through 8, Algebra I, and English II).

Points are assigned to each assessment with a valid score based on the following scale (only Full Academic Year students are included):

- Advanced = 4 points
- Proficient = 3 points
- Limited Knowledge = 2 points
- Unsatisfactory = 1 point.<sup>1</sup>

The schools are then ranked according to their average performance level point value. A school must have at least 10 exams in reading and/or math and be eligible for a focus designation in that subgroup (see **Appendix A**) to be included in the ranking. Schools are ranked separately according to their grade span (i.e., PK – 8 school, Elementary School, Middle School, and High School). The focus cut score for each grade span and subgroup will be the score that marks the bottom 30% of schools within each ranking.

### **Calculating Focus Cut Scores for Graduation Rates**

The focus cut score for each subgroup is calculated by ranking the subgroup performance of Title I schools on their average graduation rate from the three most recently reported school years. The focus cut score for each subgroup will be the score that marks the bottom 10% of schools within each ranking.

**Note:** If the school has closed the gap between the earliest of the three most recent graduation rates and 100% by at least 50% for the subgroup they are being ranked on, then that school is exempt from being designated as a Focus school using this criterion.

<sup>1</sup> Federal guidelines limit the number of OAAP tests that can count as proficient or advanced for accountability purposes to 1% of the total number of students tested within a district. Any exams over this limit must be counted as “Limited Knowledge.”

For more information or questions about the identification of Focus schools, please contact:

**The Office of Accountability**

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For more information about the requirements for a school identified as a Focus school, please visit <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/Designation%20Chart.pdf> or contact:

**The Office of School Support**

(405) 522 - 0140